

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PARKS, RECREATION & RAILROAD

DATE: NOVEMBER 28, 2006

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS BELDEN
 O'CONNOR
 GABRIELS
 VANNESS
 F. THOMAS
 STEC
 GERAGHTY
 MERLINO

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

HASKELL

OTHERS PRESENT:

PAT BELAND, DIRECTOR - PARKS, RECREATION &
RAILROAD
PAUL BUTLER, RECREATION FACILITIES MANAGER
WILLIAM LAMY, DPW SUPERINTENDENT
WILLIAM THOMAS, CHAIRMAN
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISOR SOKOL
JOANN MCKINSTRY, CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY TO
THE COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND
FISCAL SERVICES
AMANDA ALLEN, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

In the absence of Committee Chairman Haskell, Vice Chairman Supervisor Belden called the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Railroad Committee to order at 10:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Geraghty and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 13th Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Pat Beland, Director of the Parks, Recreation and Railroad Division, who distributed copies of his agenda to the Committee members, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Mr. Beland began with the first item of the agenda which was a request to authorize the acquisition, re-establishment expenses and moving expenses of the Biondi Property for Rail Stations Project #1755.H890-220. He noted that the final costs for this portion of the project were \$258,050, and a breakdown of that figure was included in the agenda. Mr. Beland added that the numbers had been determined according to Federal guidelines and the supporting documentation was available for review at the County Attorney's Office.

Mr. Belden asked if the Biondi property in question was secured by way of eminent domain and Mr. Beland replied that it was not. He added that no property had been acquired in such a manner, all sites had been secured via friendly negotiations. Mr. Beland noted that the project was funded by a Federal grant which was proportioned 80% Federal share and 20% Local share.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Gabriels and carried unanimously to approve the request to authorize the acquisition, re-establishment expenses and moving expenses of Biondi Property for Rail Station Project #1755.H890-220 at a total cost of \$258,050. The necessary resolution was authorized for the December 15th Board meeting and a copy of the request is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Beland advised that included in the agenda was a chart reflecting the totals designated for the Warren County Scenic Train Stations and Improvements projects and the level of funds that remained to complete the projects. The chart also showed a breakdown of the Federal and Local share of the funding, he added.

Mr. Beland advised that because he had received several inquiries on the large structure currently standing on the Biondi property, public bidding would be held for salvage rights and removal of the building. He noted that because 80% of the project had been Federally funded, that percentage of the proceeds received from the removal of the building would have to be returned to the Federal Government, while Warren County would retain the 20% Local share. Mr. Beland said that he was working on negotiations to have those funds re-allocated into the Rail Station Project.

Mr. Merlino apprised that he had been approached by the Postmaster of the Town of Hadley with respect to placing a Post Office within the Hadley Rail Station. He said that if the Committee showed interest in the prospect, the Postmaster would then contact the Postal Service to determine the extent of the requirements for the addition. Mr. Beland noted that he had researched the possibility and found that although the Post Office would be a wonderful tenant, there were strict structural requirements for the development of a Post Office which would have to be included in the construction plans, raising the costs considerably. Mr. Beland suggested that the option be researched further to determine the extent of the additions needed and the possibility of the Postal Services' funding a portion of the project. Mr. Merlino summarized that the addition would delay the project and increase the cost and Mr. Beland agreed.

Discussion ensued.

It was the consensus of the Committee that Mr. Merlino should contact the Post Master and ask that he contact the Postal Service to determine the construction requirements of the Post Office and also to find if there would be any contribution towards construction costs.

Mr. Merlino apprised that the train would be returning to the Town of Hadley on Sunday, December 3rd and making a trip to the 1000 Acres Ranch Resort for refreshments. He added that Santa Claus would be present to visit with the younger riders of the train.

Mr. Belden asked if there would be a holiday train ride departing from the North Creek Station, and Paul Butler, Recreation Facilities Manager, replied that the Polar Express would be departing from the Riparius Station and traveling to the North Creek Station on December 9th.

Returning to the agenda, Mr. Beland advised that the second item listed was a request for a resolution authorizing the purchase of The Boston & Maine Caboose #482. He added that the Caboose would be purchased from Jeffrey L. Sweet for the amount of \$50,000,

which included the contents. Mr. Beland said that although the Committee had already authorized the purchase and the funds had been appropriated, the County Attorney's Office had requested a resolution supporting the authorization.

Motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously to authorize the purchase of The Boston & Maine Caboose #482, including contents, for \$50,000 from Jeffrey L. Sweet. The necessary resolution was authorized for the December 15th Board meeting and a copy of the request is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Beland apprised that the third agenda item pertained to improvements to the Agricultural Fairgrounds. He explained that Cornell Cooperative Extension had obtained a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for \$32,500 and there had been some discussion about using these funds to construct another large pavilion at the Fairgrounds. Mr. Beland estimated that the cost of the materials for the pavilion would be approximately \$15,000 and the balance of the grant would be used to make improvements to the amenities available such as the electrical service.

Although past improvements to the restrooms and such had been made, Mr. Beland advised that the use of the Fairgrounds had not increased. He stated that currently, the site was only used for a one day Youth Fair and a Middle Ages Re-enactment group which rented the site for the weekend corresponding with the 4th of July holiday. Other than those two events, Mr. Beland said that the site was used for parking during the Warrensburg Garage Sale.

Mr. Geraghty asked if the site was still used for the Bluegrass Festival and Mr. Beland replied that it had been used as such for a few years, but the use had been discontinued due to some issues with the Public Health Department.

Mr. Beland stated that he felt the Fairgrounds could be put to much better use if they were promoted. He added that the site was conducive to flea markets, snowmobile/ATV expositions, sportsman shows and other such events. Mr. Beland advised that there was a gentleman interested in hosting a swap meet at the Fairgrounds during Americade weekend; he added that other such events could be drawn to the site if it were promoted for those purposes.

Mr. Belden said that he felt a new pavilion should be built if grant funding were available to finance it. He added that he thought the Fairgrounds should be promoted by the Tourism Department as a site for the events listed by Mr. Beland.

Mr. Beland suggested contacting the Chamber of Commerce to promote the Fairgrounds as a possible site for events which they scheduled and Mr. Geraghty agreed that was another possibility for advertisement.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Belden suggested that the promotion of the Fairgrounds be addressed at the next Tourism Committee meeting for further discussion.

Mr. Belden asked how large the new pavilion would be and Mr. Butler replied that the dimensions would be 32 by 80 feet and it would be centrally located to the existing buildings and pavilions.

Motion was made by Mr. VanNess, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the construction of a new pavilion at the Agricultural Fairgrounds site using grant funding received by Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Mr. Belden noted that the ski trails located in the Town of Hague were well used by its residents. He advised that New York State maintained the lighting of the trails, however the Town was unable to groom the trails because their equipment was no longer usable. Mr. Beland advised that his Department had obtained new grooming equipment and they would be maintaining the trails for the Town of Hague.

Mr. Stec asked Mr. Beland if the mound of dirt had been removed from the front of the snowmobile trail gate as authorized in a prior meeting and Mr. Beland replied that he had visited the site but the pile had already been moved. Mr. Stec asked if Mr. Beland had been given a key for the gate, and Mr. Beland replied that he had not, adding that the snowmobile club did not wish to leave the gate unlocked. Mr. Merlino stated that the club wanted the gate to remain closed to deter the use of anything other than snowmobiles on those trails. He added that a key would be available for the groomer's use.

As all of the items on the agenda had been discussed and handled accordingly, and in order to inject a few moments of levity before the end of the meeting, Mr. Merlino produced a "proposed resolution" which he distributed to the Committee members; *a copy of the farcical resolution is on file with the minutes*. The purpose of the resolution was to "prevent" the retirement of Mr. Beland, which was rumored to occur early in 2007. With the Committee members, along with the rest of the Warren County staff, knowing that Mr. Beland's retirement would leave the County with pretty big shoes to fill, the Committee wanted to show their appreciation of Mr. Beland in some small way for his many years of dedicated service to the County. General discussion and hilarity ensued, and all enjoyed a good laugh at the contents of this "resolution", which ended the meeting on a positive note.

As there was no further business to come before the Committee, on motion made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Merlino, Mr. Belden adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist